



May 23, 2019

## Follow up to Council Retreat

### Goals as Stated in Retreat Agenda:

- A. Lay out and create clear understanding of the budget process and calendar
- B. Come to consensus as to general norms for committee attendance, council use of staff chain of command, and communication preferences
- C. Agree upon and plan any new reoccurring reports or meetings that may be needed

### Tangible Outcomes / Agreements for Action:

#### **Budget**

- Unanimous agreement to move toward a biennial budget as soon as it can be phased in.

*Biennial budgets can only start at the end of even numbered years. This means we can start to develop a 2-year budget in 2020 that will cover 2021 and 2022.*

- Include narrative descriptions/explanations of budget line items in budget reports

*We will improve our budget narrative each year, including this one. But in 2019 this task competes with implementing the new Finance software, so we will not see full implementation in the 2020 budget. This will have to be a work in progress.*

- During budget creation process, before the budget is finalized, forward a list of all major initiatives (general fund and enterprise/utility) to Council; knowing that not all will be funded in that budget cycle.

*We will do this as part of the Mayor's budget presentation to council.*

- Create a replacement or "sinking fund".

*This will depend on the availability of funds. But we can make this a priority in future budgets, beginning with the 2020 spending plan.*

- Create ordinance to allow Council to approve budget and staff to make expenditures on that approved budget without coming back for line item reapproval.
  - Come back for approval if any item is going over budget
  - Show the immediate budget implementation expenses as well as any long-term ongoing maintenance expenses during the initial implementation budget request.
  - Report to Council on major purchases (but without necessitating reapproval).

*Bob Carmichael has drafted the ordinance, and I have circulated it to all councilmembers. I've asked Anthony to bring through Finance Committee to Council June 17.*

### **Additional Meetings/Reporting**

- Quarterly, allow for a longer Council meeting to accommodate an update of the Staff Work Plan.

*We have scheduled these updates for the first meetings in July, October and January (2020). If for some reason a meeting date doesn't work, we will move it back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of the month. The presentation will occur at the end of the regular council agenda. Councilmembers may wish to forgo committee reports (if there are any) at that meeting or keep them very short.*

- Create shared folders to hold department reports, staff work plan updates and other informational resources for Council to access.

*Nic will have this in place June 3. We will send you an e-mail with instructions, and place copies in your boxes. Nic and Laurie will provide help to councilmembers who need it.*

### **Council Committees**

- For a trial period (6-12 months), publish all committee public notices with the possibility that Council quorum (4 or more Councilors) may be present. This is to allow Councilors who want to learn more about other committees or particular subjects, to attend freely.

*Councilmembers will be able to attend any committee meeting that interests them beginning June 3. This practice will continue through November, at which time it will be evaluated.*

- Share committee agendas with all Councilors ahead of time, to allow Councilors who are not on a committee to see if there is a subject for which they would like to attend.

*The Leadership Team was asked to begin this practice in May.*

### **Council-Staff Communication Best Practices**

- Councilors should primarily connect directly with Department Heads when they want to ask questions about that department.
  - The chair of the committee that advises that department can also be a good direct contact for information.
  - If there is a request for activity/work, that request should go through the City Administrator or Mayor.
  - When possible, it is best to request an appointment and share the general topic you want to talk about, rather than showing up unannounced.
  
- Be careful to redirect any staff attempt to end-run the chain of command with grievance or disgruntlement.
  - Redirect staff to (a) their direct supervisor, (b) HR, (c) the City Administrator, or (d) the Mayor.
  - Consider attending AWC conventions to learn about potential Councilor personal liabilities when stepping into any staff employment issues.
  - If the City Council as a group wishes to request staff morale/engagement/satisfaction information; that should come from the Council as a whole to the Mayor and City Administrator.

*This section is largely comprised of things Council agreed to do and is self-explanatory.*

### **Other**

- Council unanimously agreed to consider hiring/creating an In-House Legal Counsel unit (City Attorney and paralegal)

*We will discuss this again as part of the 2021-22 biennial budget. There was agreement that if we go this direction, we would give Bob 12-18 months so he can prepare for the significant financial change this would cause.*

- Notify Council by email or otherwise of any quasi-judicial items that may be upcoming.

*We have already begun this practice.*

- Explore Examples and Content to inform development of a Strategic Plan. Consider another retreat for this purpose.

*We discussed this at our Leadership Team meeting April 23 and will begin to develop a concept for council to respond to. This to be done as time allows. Added to the Administration workplan for 2019.*